



Chinese American Educational Research and Development Association
北美華人教育研究及策劃協會

Tribute to Dr. Duc-Le To
January 24, 2010




Your profound dedication and unwavering support to the Chinese American Educational Research and Development Association has made a significant impact on Chinese American education. Your impact will be felt for generations to come. Thank you for your guidance, support, and friendship.
Lungching Chiao, Ph.D.




Duc-Le was a man of heart and passion, and a good role model.
– Sam Peng, Ph.D.




Duc-Le will be long remembered as a wonderful colleague.
– Jie-Qi Chen, Ph.D.




I can always recall his pleasant personality and whole-hearted support to our organization... All treasured memories. It is our great loss to lose such a great mentor.
– Rong Yuan, Ph.D.



A friend and colleague, Duc-le was gentle, insightful, loyal, and committed. His devotion to public service was unparalleled. He will be missed so dearly. His legacy will continue as he had touched so many lives.
- Jianping Shen, Ph.D.



A big hit to CAERDA and me.
CAERDA has lost a great leader.
I have lost a patient advisor, intelligent colleague, and a truthful friend.
-Chuang Wang, Ph.D.





Where shall I start?
A friend and mentor that was too hasty to depart.
I haven't returned your hospitality as I promised
You haven't received my signed book as we agreed.

Perhaps God wanted your accompany indeed,
as you are so compassionate and fun to be around.
Friendship never ends when friends are apart.
Your smile is always cherished in the heart.

-Yan Zhao, Ph.D.



For someone whom I have met only twice (but exchanged numerous emails), Duc-Le touched my life in a very unique way. During my two years of service to CAERDA, he was more than a mentor and a role model—he was, and still is, the heart and soul of CAERDA. I never imagined that my path would cross with an association like CAERDA until he inspired me with his passion for and dedication to Chinese American education.

He was a scholar and a scientist with whom I had the most pleasant experience collaborating with, and yet he also had a soft spot in his big heart for his fellow Chinese Americans. His visionary leadership left behind a legacy that will be remembered for a long time to come.

– Leigh Wang, Ph.D.



Duc-Le was a compassionate mentor, visionary leader, and a considerate friend. As a mentor, Duc-Le taught me what it meant to provide service to the Chinese American community. He showed me the impact of putting your heart into your work, of caring for each individual as a person, and of being selfless in serving others. As a leader, Duc-Le has helped shape the growth and development of the association. He was active in aligning the association with AERA, in the development of the edited book series, and in the planning and coordination of numerous conferences. Duc-Le was a cheerful and helpful friend. He was quick to assume more work if he felt it was needed. He was always good-humored and approached everyone with a ready smile. Duc-Le will be very much missed.

– Aubrey Wang, Ph.D.





Dr. Duc-Le To was kind and easy going. I met him when I attended last year's CAERDA conference. It was my first year attending the conference and Dr. To kindly introduced to me, the background and history of the organization. He also encouraged me to continue to be productive in the field of education. Later that year, when I attended another conference at Washington, D.C., Dr. To volunteered to be our family's tour guide. Under his guidance, we had an interesting and enjoyable visit.

Even though I knew Dr. To only for a short period of time, his kindness as a friend and colleague will always be remembered.
May you lie in peace with God.

-Susan Sun, Ph.D.



I am greatly saddened to learn of Duc-Le To's passing. Albeit our friendship was less than a decade, when we did communicate it was laden with care and concern for the objectives of CAERDA and its members.

We first met in Chicago in conjunction with the joint meeting of CAERDA and AERA and it was bitter cold that week. Due-Le's hearty welcome, his concern for my Asian students from UCF, and his inclusion of me in all of the activities that year was phenomenal.

Later, in 2004, while I was in Taiwan studiously trying to immerse myself in learning Mandarin, CAERDA met in San Diego and, since that city was just a short hop from Taipei, I flew over for the meeting and to once more, co-present with my UCF Asian students. That was the year, as I recall, that under the guidance of Steve Yuen, SCICET was born and I became one of their charter members as well. As always, Duc-Le's smiling face was the one who warmly greeted me and he again expressed his thanks to me for helping the UCF Asian kids.

All too little time has since past and now it is we, collectively, Western and Eastern colleagues, have our last opportunity to thank Duc-Le, so all may know of his goodness.

Indeed, I shall miss his smile, his articulate and probing questions of my students, and his continual sense of caring for our young Asian scholars. For the past five years or more I have been spending each summer in China teaching my own students on-line, about Asia and its role in global education. What I teach reflects, in many ways, many of the concerns often expressed by Duc-Le, so, while I have lost a good friend, I will do all I can to retain the values he emulated and draw strength from his inspiration.

- Richard Cornell, Ph.D.





In my short contact with Duc-Le during the past year serving on the CAERDA board, I remember him as a very thoughtful and enthusiastic person. His dedication to CAERDA was incredible and very evident in every event, every part of discussion and interactions with the board members. His unconditional support to the association clearly indicated his passion and quality. He will be greatly missed.


Ya-yu Lo, Ph.D.



Duc-Le's name first caught my attention when I was compiling the membership directory, as the Secretary of CAERDA, many years ago. I had a hard time figuring out which of the Chinese dialects would pronounce the last name "蘇" as "To". Finally we met in one of the CAERDA dinner at the AERA. Between the years of 2000 and 2002, we worked closely on planning of the conferences. I often called him at the office around 5:30 p.m. or later, and he was always there. The phone calls might last half an hour to an hour as we went through all the details, and most of the time I was "picking his brain" for ideas. He was always very patient in listening, and provided me great insights and advises. Duc, as many of us called him, is so dependable that you can almost count on him for anything, large and small. I remember that he and I walking from hotel to hotel with flyers of CAERDA dinner invitation to get as many Chinese as we could at the last minute. I also remember when we were touring the San Francisco China Town, Steve Yuen and I wanted to buy some Chinese herbs and spices, and Duc took us to one particular store he considered as "trustworthy" so we could get the best deal. I know that I'll always remember him when I look at the index card with his phone number written on it, when I attend the CAERDA meetings and dinners, and when I walk down the streets of San Francisco China Town.

-Chi-en Hwang, Ph.D.





Observations and Reflection at Dr. Duc-Le To's Funeral Service on January 16, 2010
Ji-Mei Chang, Ph.D. & Steve C. Yuen, Ph.D.
January 22, 2010

Guided by our GPS, we arrived early in the morning on January 16th at Mt. Tamalpais Mortuary and Cemetery up in the hill near the city of San Rafael. It appeared that we were the only two guests at the funeral service from outside of the circle of Dr. To's extended family members and local friends. Immediately, we were most impressed by the close and warm family relationships he had established. It seemed that throughout his life, Duc-Le was surrounded by a caring and kind mother, siblings, nieces, nephews, and an extended family of five brothers and one older sister. We learned that Duc-Le was the fourth son. They all spoke highly of him as a dear brother, a loving and very intelligent uncle, as well as a fun and loyal friend. His nephew, Joseph To, spoke about the fact that his uncle Duc-le had two parts to his life, one part focused on family, the other on his work. His family regretted that they didn't know much of Duc-Le's professional life. Dr. Steve Yuen eulogized Dr. To at the service and shared with the mourners the significant contributions he made to CAERDA as well as to the educational research communities both nationally and internationally.

Dr. To was such a humble scholar; it was not in his nature to talk about his educational contributions through the wide range of research projects, policies, professional associations and groups in which he participated. Fortunately, there will be a memorial service on Jan 24 at Falls Church Community Center in Falls Church, Virginia, where his mother, siblings, nieces, nephews and extended family members will have the opportunity to learn about Dr. To's professional contributions and his extended network of supporters in this arena.

Watching and listening as the funeral progressed at the chapel in the morning as well as interacting with Duc-Le's family members at the funeral luncheon, we can't help but feel a sense of comfort. Duc-Le had a great, supportive, loving, and caring family. He had always been well loved and respected among them. Duc-Le also appeared peaceful in an open casket. At about noon, Steve was asked by Duc-Le's family to serve as one of the pallbearers sending the casket for cremation in a nearby building. Attending Duc-Le's funeral helped us reach some measure of closure for our great friendship. He will remain in our hearts. May he rest in peace.